

October 24, 1967

MEMORANDUM

TO: Melville J. Ruggles

FROM: E. Shepley Nourse

SUBJECT: Summary Highlights of Commission Meetings of
October 9, 10, 11, 1967 (from my rough notes)

October 9, 1967 - a.m.

The proceedings came to order with Vice Chairman Burkhardt presiding as Acting Chairman during the period of Chairman Knight's illness. Attention was called to the agenda materials, particularly a first-draft report written by Dr. Wagman at the request of the Acting Chairman, a staff document referred to as Recommendations of Members, and a table of contents with chapter-by-chapter subheads and a key to both documents. It was suggested that discussion be structured according to the chapter headings, and discussion started with the chapter on school libraries. However, it soon became clear that topical rigidity was preventing both isolation of basic issues and concentration on the Commission's major recommendations which had begun to take shape at the previous meeting. The morning's discussion actually focused on the rationale for federal involvement in library and information service.

I. The Federal Government

A. The rationale for federal involvement:

Broadly, the concept of creative federalism has been accepted by modern society; the federal government has not only a right but a duty to become involved where matters affecting the public good are not currently being dealt with by other sectors. At present there is no other adequate source of leadership and financial support for zeroing in on such basic dilemmas as the need to reconcile the librarian's traditional custodial role and emerging entrepreneurial role. Descriptive statistics on libraries (the inadequacy of which in itself justifies federal involvement) are indicative enough

of severe inefficiency to compel federal attention (e. g., school library problems may threaten the entire structure of public education). The Commission must set forth clear criteria for federal involvement in the multifaceted but interlocking functions of all kinds of library and information services nationally and even internationally. (Hubbard, Lacy, and Clapp contributed significantly to the above discussion.)

B. The problem of federal, state, and local relationships:

It is clear the Commission has not come to grips with the issues involved here, almost certainly because the membership is so diverse that the aspects perceived by one element are not yet clearly understood by others -- it seems not to be an area of basically conflicting views within the Commission, but rather an area where communication is still in process; the whole picture has not yet emerged. As far as elementary and secondary school libraries and public libraries go, it seems taken for granted that federal aid should go to the states and be parceled out from there. However, it would be extremely dangerous if anything the Commission's report stated might appear to be generalizable to all kinds of libraries and information services -- not all aid should filter through the states. Professional education, for example, is a national and not a state resource. However, it was emphasized that the states are the political reality -- if states feel left out it would be hard to get legislation through Congress. In this part of the discussion, it seemed clear the Commission was not in agreement about Dr. Wagman's recommendations 12 and 13 on page 31. There were some formal motions about deletion but it was too early for formal actions. In any event, it was agreed there should be some kind of annotated index to existing legislation presented somewhere in the Commission's report. Caution was urged in criticising such legislation as NDEA, which has the support of both parties in Congress. All seem agreed that appropriate relationships between all levels of government and between them and private sectors are vital if "networks" (interlibrary cooperation systems) are to succeed and if legislation is to be effectively implemented. (Brodman, Hubbard, and Elliott contributed to the above discussion.)

C. The need for coordination:

In discussion about specific legislation affecting libraries, there was apparent consensus that initiating legislation was one thing and implementing existing legislation was quite another. Putting all the legislation in one package did not seem to be the answer to avoiding fragmentation. The Commission's Report must state clearly the principle of the need for coordination; this was mentioned many times. (Fussler contributed here.)

D. The Commission's recommendations:

There was pressure to discuss the role of the continuing national library commission -- the justification for its establishment, its administrative relationships, and its specific functions. The general function of coordination was the only one mentioned during the morning session, however. There was also pressure to differentiate between the Commission's major recommendations (such as establishing the permanent commission) and minor ones. There was some desire to discuss the appropriate degree of specificity in the Commission's recommendations -- e.g., with reference to Dr. Wagman's item 11 on page 31, it might be better to be more general and say that it is appropriate for the federal government to finance research and experimentation when the private sector cannot and will not do so; both incentive and direct support are needed. Some members of the Commission were still in favor of emphasizing basic principles in the Commission's report. (Brodman, Overhage, Lacy, Eurich, and others contributed to the above discussion.)

- Adjournment for lunch -

October 9, 1967 - p.m.

The afternoon session used Dr. Wagman's chapter on the federal government as a take-off for discussion. There was some impression (although not actually verbalized) that this should be the first chapter following the introductory chapter of the report. The discussion focused

on the four basic functions the Commission must take into account in its organizational recommendations regarding the federal government and libraries: (1) advisory, (2) policy-making, (3) operational, and (4) grant-making. There was apparent consensus that the Commission wishes to include both libraries in the conventional sense and information transfer in general, recognizing a false dichotomy between traditional literary information and newer information.

II. The Advisory, Policy-Making, Operational, and Grant-Making Functions

A. The continuing commission:

This part of the discussion was characterized by a groping for analogies and models. The UNESCO commission was criticized for being too big and not having staff or funds. The National Historical Publications Commission was mentioned; it is attached to one agency of government (the National Archives and Records Service of the General Services Administration) but reports to the world at large. There was apparent consensus that the continuing library commission should: (1) have advisory, coordinating, and broad policy-making functions, (2) be attached to HEW for housekeeping (the Secretary, not OE) but be able to recommend to anybody, (3) be representative in membership but relatively small in size (e. g., 20 members), (4) have funds and staff, and (5) publish regular periodic reports. It was agreed the present Commission's recommendations should suggest how the chairman and regular and ex officio members might be chosen, but there was no substantive discussion on these points at the October meetings. It was agreed the phrase "libraries and information science" should appear in the continuing commission's title. (Clapp and Lacy contributed significantly to this discussion.)

B. The national library:

Since Mr. Elliott was missing during this discussion, it was not as conclusive as it might otherwise have been, particularly with respect to possible relocation of the Library of Congress in the Executive Branch. It was not clear in the discussion whether the national library organization the Commission evidently did want to recommend should be the Library of Congress only, LC jointly with other national libraries (including a possible new library of science and technology), or

a completely new structure. Similarly there was no consensus on the national library's board (or boards) of regents and whether or not the continuing commission, or subcommittees of it, could function in this role. (The board of regents for the National Library of Medicine reports through the Surgeon General to the President and Congress.) It did seem agreed the national library should be the official operating agency of the continuing commission. It seemed agreed that user-generated responsiveness was considered the mission of the national library. (Hubbard, Lacy, Clapp, and others contributed to this discussion.)

C. The grant-making authority:

Some grant-making alternatives and combinations were mentioned -- e. g., National Science Foundation, National Foundation on the Arts and ^{the} Humanities, Office of Education, and Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Diffuse and flexible grant-making authority seemed to be the desired objective. (Carter, Lacy, Brodman, and others contributed to the discussion here.)

- Adjournment until October 10 -

October 10, 1967 - a.m.

The session opened with a report that the door was still open for extending the life of the Commission. The next meeting is set for November 27-28, which may be the last or next-to-last unless the time is extended. It was announced that absent Chairman Knight has invited the Commission to meet at Duke University in Durham, instead of Washington as originally planned.

III. The Research and Development Function and the Library of Congress as the National Library

A. The continuing commission:

There was some discussion of a draft recommendation incorporating material from the previous day's discussion on setting up the continuing commission on libraries and

information sciences. The major criticism of the draft was that it did not outline the mission and functions of the proposed body. It was clear from discussion that the members were still not in agreement on the membership of the continuing commission (e.g., citizens vs. experts) or how government should be represented thereon. There was no apparent consensus with respect to OE reorganization and its relation to the continuing commission as set forth in Dr. Wagman's item 2 on page 111.

B. A research and development unit:

A fourth major element, provision for research and development, was added to the three major recommendation areas discussed the previous day. (These were: a continuing commission, a national library, a grant-making mechanism.) Possible ways of handling research and development were mentioned -- e.g., National Science Foundation, Office of Education, Library of Congress, or an institute set-up comparable to National Institutes of Health. It was mentioned that research and development should enable multidisciplinary endeavors (humanities and social and behavioral sciences as well as natural and physical sciences -- also such disciplines as law, accountancy, administration, etc.) and not be restricted to problem-solving in the areas affected by new technology. The institute idea seemed favored and Dr. Carter was asked to draft a proposal. (Carter, Greenaway, and Lacy contributed to this discussion.)

C. Locale of the Library of Congress:

Although the Commission still had not taken any action on the Library of Congress as the national library, the tone of this discussion implied that such a recommendation was almost a consensus. There was even a formal action passed to the effect that whether LC stayed in the Legislative Branch or moved to the Executive its own board of regents (or advisory committee) should be established, evidently separate from the continuing commission, and with the charge to work toward making LC the national library (not clear if the charge was part of the approved motion; there was definite disagreement but no further formal action). Mr. Elliott favored keeping the Legislative Reference Service as part of the Legislative Branch but moving the National Library functions to the true leadership

spot, the Executive Branch -- or else setting up a new organization in the Executive with real authority. Presumably it is easier to get funds under the Legislative, and it is true that Congressional pride in its library must be maintained, but Mr. Elliott felt it doubtful that Congress could run a national library and mentioned that perhaps it would be better just to recommend a national library and let the President decide. The functions of a proposed national library were not discussed at all, not even reference to the previous day's mention of "user-generated responsiveness" and "official operating agency of the continuing commission." There were no answers to questions about court libraries, other national libraries, the existing Federal Library Committee, and the international implications. (Elliott, Clapp, and Lacy contributed to the above discussion.)

- Adjournment for lunch -

October 10, 1967 - p.m.

The afternoon session was devoted mostly to the regional hearings and to discussion of procedure, although a few other items came up.

IV. Regional Hearings and Procedural Detail on the Commission's Report

A. Regional hearings:

There was an enthusiastic informal report of the hearings that had already been held. The general feeling was that these hearings were not only good politics but contributed to the insight of Commission members who attended; some members were scolded for not attending. There are apparently great differences in local and state politics from place to place and where state service is inadequate the public looks to the federal government. The library manpower shortage was evident everywhere. A budgetary problem necessitated eliminating some scheduled hearings but the program can continue. Some hearings have been stenotyped and someone is evidently doing some writing. Mrs. Moore sought the Commission's attitude toward seeking outside support for publication, and apparently there was no opposition. There seemed to be little enthusiasm

about including a report of the regional hearings in the Commission's report, but this may be due to time pressure. (Moore, Elliott, Wallace, Gallagher, and others contributed to the above discussion.)

B. Procedure for the Commission's Report:

There was apparently some confusion on what kind of a report the majority of the Commission wanted, and there was some feeling that basic issues should be delineated, using the special study reports to develop the conclusions rather than adding points from the studies to the existing first-draft text. All but two of the study reports are now in. It was announced that members and monitoring committees should send their ideas, comments, criticisms, and recommendations to Dr. Burkhardt, Mr. Ruggles, and Dr. Wagman so that a revised version of the first-draft text could be ready for the members about November 17 for study prior to the November meeting. It was announced that absent Chairman Knight would have complete imprimatur privilege when he returns to active chairmanship.

C. Substantive points:

1. Major points mentioned for inclusion in the report include: (a) right of citizens to free access and the limits of this right, (b) the right of local control, (c) the federal-state-local partnership complex, (d) suggestions for a national policy statement, and (e) criteria for federal involvement.
2. Technology: some members thought Dr. Wagman's chapter on this subject was too negative.
3. Copyright: since legislation now pending may affect research and development in education and network planning, should the Commission take a position, even though that position may be counter to that of the profit-making publisher? Dr. Overhage brought up this question and suggested that at the very least the Commission should state recognition of the problem.

-Adjournment until October 11 -

October 11, 1967 - a.m.

The morning session was highlighted by a visit from Dr. Barnaby Keeney of the National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities and also included some discussion of both procedure and substantive points.

V. Procedural Detail on the Commission's Report and Interview with Dr. Barnaby Keeney

A. Procedure for the Commission's Report:

Dr. Carter submitted his written version of the recommendation for a research and development Institute. Then Dr. Fussler submitted his suggested timetable for successive drafts of the report to be done by Dr. Wagman and a drafting committee. (Subsequent to the meeting, Commission members were notified that the drafting committee consisting of Burkhardt, Lacy, Fussler, Overhage, and Clapp would meet with Wagman in New York on October 27 and 28.) It was mentioned that absent Chairman Knight would be brought completely up to date before the drafting committee met, and it was agreed that he would be asked to write the very important introductory chapter. Mr. Clapp suggested that one rather extensive section should be devoted to the role of the permanent commission. Dr. Eurich suggested that the report should be reorganized according to three major parts: (1) Dr. Knight's introduction, (2) the Commission's major recommendations and the federal government, and (3) the subsidiary recommendations and other problems for future study by the continuing commission.

B. Substantive points:

1. Criteria for federal involvement should be differentiated, including a thorough discussion of the criterion of social value. The criteria for a proper mix of federal, state, and local are more difficult to isolate.

2. Semantical difficulties

a. Mr. Lacy suggested clarifying that the new technology means that libraries of the future will have to store material that makes its initial appearance in a machine-readable format; we continue to talk as though technology merely means translation of content as we know it into newer formats.

- b. It was suggested that the word "library" should be defined according to the functional needs it serves.

C. Interview with Dr. Barnaby Keeney:

Dr. Keeney, chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities of the National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities, briefly described the current status of his organization, established in 1965. The Act terminates this fiscal year and during the summer House and Senate hearings were held regarding its revision for the future. The NEH goals with respect to libraries (mostly research libraries) include improving libraries to points of appropriate usefulness and encouraging use for undergraduate teaching. Libraries, although an integral part of the NEH program, are not number-one priority. In answer to questions about recommendations of the Commission, Dr. Keeney was told that research libraries would be recommended eligible for federal aid, that no comments had been contemplated about encouraging their use in undergraduate teaching, and that LC was a possible spot for a national library. He suggested the possibility of a consortium idea for the national library, i. e., an inter-agency set-up including NIH, NSF, NEH, and possibly also OE.

1. Functions of the national library mentioned in this discussion include networks establishment, bibliographic control, helping other libraries, being a model, and possibly some research.
2. Encouraging library use was the main theme of other discussion - e. g., phone and delivery service, seeking funds for a demonstration library-in-supermarket experiment.

- Adjournment for lunch -

October 11, 1967 - p.m.

The afternoon session was devoted to a few business matters, some special study reports, and further discussion on the federal government that hit on the recurrent themes of criteria for federal involvement and the problem of routing federal aid.

VI. Special Study Reports, Business Matters, and Further Discussion on the Federal Government

A. Business matters:

1. Approval of minutes: the September minutes were formally approved with the addition of Dr. Louis Wright's name as the luncheon guest and with correction in spelling the word "concensi" (proper spelling of the plural is "consensuses" or the singular form "consensus" could be used).
2. Locale of November meeting: Although many members preferred Washington as the locale, it was agreed that the presence of absent Chairman Knight was the determining factor; if he could only attend the meeting if it were at Duke University in Durham, then it would definitely be held there.

B. Special study reports:

1. Special library study: Dr. Overhage reported that the study attempted to meet its charge responsibly but was full of general platitudes and should not be published.
2. State library study: Mrs. Moore reported that the study was good but that state librarians on its advisory committee were hampered by their own affiliation with state departments of education. She felt the study's recommendations were o.k.; state libraries are the weak link but the political key to the public library system. In the discussion it was suggested that the Commission should recommend that the states should examine their outmoded laws. It was mentioned that state systems should be strengthened, but their inadequacies should not be increased at the same time.

C. The rationale for federal involvement:

Again the discussion turned to the question of why the federal government should support an already affluent profession, and Dr. Hubbard emphasized strongly the criterion of social value -- i. e., the medical and health professions, and consequently their research and education, have obvious social value and are obviously dependent on very costly physical and informational facilities, far beyond the means of an individual

practitioner or investigator. The situation in law is quite different; it is a literature-based profession and individual practitioners have extensive libraries of their own; also there is the economic factor of the commercial legal publishing industry. There was evidence of some need to clarify the vast differences in informational needs between professions (including their educational and research aspects), particularly since the special libraries study evidently tends to consider libraries for the professions as among several other merely "special" libraries. The plea not to generalize about routing federal aid via the individual states came up again. At the end, Dr. Fussler wondered if the Commission should make any recommendations about the matching phenomenon and federal funding.

Note: Before adjourning the three-day meeting, the Commission extended its warm thanks for the wonderful hospitality of Dr. and Mrs. Caryl Haskins at the Carnegie Institution of Washington and at the Sulgrave Club luncheons.

- Adjournment -